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## SITUATING COROPLAST AND MOULDED-WARE PRODUCTIONS IN LATE ANTIQUE SAGALASSOS (SW TURKEY)

The ancient city of Sagalassos (SW Turkey) offers the unusually well preserved remains of a ceramic industry that operated in a ca. 6-hectare area of the city's Eastern Suburbium between the mid-/late Hellenistic times and the 7<sup>th</sup> century AD. Although this industry mostly produced wheel-thrown table wares (designated Sagalassos red slip ware),<sup>1</sup> other ceramic products were also manufactured in the city, including a variety of mold-made wares and figurines. The diversity of production present in the Eastern Suburbium has afforded a unique opportunity to explore the social and economic relationships of these workshops and to consider how developments in figurine and ceramic production were situated within contemporary social and economic trends of the city and region.

The tableware workshops of Sagalassos have been explored since the late 1980s by the Sagalassos Archaeological Research Project<sup>2</sup> under the auspices of Leuven University (Belgium). Since 2004, a series of late Roman (2<sup>nd</sup>-half 4<sup>th</sup> to 1<sup>st</sup>-half 6<sup>th</sup> centuries) workshops specializing in the production of mold-made objects (including figurines) has also been investigated. This workshop complex comprises the remains of at least 5 workshops that were tightly built together and share abutting walls (see Fig. 1). Each of the workshops specialized in a highly specific repertoire of figurines, oil lamps, and oinophoroi. Although each workshop was equipped with the necessary infrastructure to be fully independent, a degree of collaboration (as evidenced by the sharing of some stamps) appears

to have been taking place between the workshop units. A relationship between the local tableware and mold-made ware workshops can also be suggested, not only based on their close geographical positioning within the same industrial quarter, but also based on their reliance on a common fabric clay and slip, raw material, and use of similar technologies (e.g. simple updraft kilns and pottery wheels).

Within the late Roman molded-ware workshops, the types of products and the iconographic renderings appear to parallel the architectural development of the complex. That is, the product repertoire can be divided into two phases – one phase beginning in the 2<sup>nd</sup>-half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, in which the workshops produced mainly large oinophoroi and oil



Fig. 1: Plan of Moulded-ware Workshops, 6th century architectural phasing highlighted in green.

lamps depicting (primarily) Dionysiac imagery, and another phase beginning in the 5<sup>th</sup> century, in which the workshops produced figurines, oil lamps, 'head pots,'<sup>4</sup> and oinophoroi depicting mostly Christian iconography. The 5<sup>th</sup> century transition in the types of manufactured products corresponded to an architectural renovation and reorganization of the entire coroplast workshop complex. The concurrence of these changes suggests that the choice of product types may have been influenced by external factors that, likewise, affected the organization of the workshop complex – both of which may have been related to broader religious, social, and economic trends.

the rider figurine type in the workshop complex (see Fig. 2). Each of these had been fashioned from the same local clay.<sup>5</sup> Although the patris-to-object sequence does not provide exact mold-matches, the presence of all three production elements in the workshops suggests that the entire production cycle was likely being performed within the workshops.

The iconography of the horse and rider figurines is consistent with other products manufactured in the workshops. For instance, the warrior on horseback can also be seen in figural scenes on oinophoroi, and the helmeted, bearded rider is consistent with the face used on

visiting Sagalassos, while still engaging and reproducing traditional imagery of local importance.

Analysis of these workshops is on-going; however, preliminary investigations are already beginning to provide important evidence concerning how the production of figurines at late antique Sagalassos was related to other industries in the city and how developments in mold-made production corresponded with, and in reaction to, changing religious, social, and economic milieus.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> For SRSW typology, see Poblome, J., *Sagalassos Red Slip Ware: Typology and Chronology* (Studies in Eastern Mediterranean Archaeology II). Turnhout: Brepols Publishers 1999

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.sagalassos.be> The fieldwork is supported by the Belgian Programme on Interuniversity Poles of Attraction (IAP 6/22), Leuven University (GOA07/02, GOA 12/05 TBA), the Hercules Foundation (AKUL/09/16) and the Fund for Scientific Research, Flanders (G.0788.09 and G.0562.11).

<sup>3</sup> All of the late Roman figurines discovered thus far are red-slipped.

<sup>4</sup> 'Head pots' is a general term used here to describe both rhytons and oinophoroi depicting a helmeted, bearded male face. Both vessel variants were produced from the same molds.

<sup>5</sup> Sagalassos Fabric Type 1, the same clay used for SRS



Figure 2: (left to right) patris, mould, finished warrior figurine



Fig. 3: (left to right) Horse and Rider Figurine, Rhyton 'Head Pot', and fragment of Oinophoros

The figurines produced in the 5<sup>th</sup> century largely fall into a single type representing a bearded warrior on horseback. The riders wear helmets and chest armor and they carry a spear accompanied by either a sword. In a few cases, a small cross is incised into the front of the helmet. The figurine sets were made in multiple molds. The horse is typically from a two-part, vertically-seamed mold, and the rider is typically from a single, frontal mold. A patris-matrix-finished object sequence has been recovered for

the 'head pots' from the workshops (see Fig. 3). P. Talloen associates this imagery with the worship of Christian warrior saints, such as St. Michael - the cult of which is well-documented at Sagalassos.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, he also considers the elements as referencing and building upon visual imagery associated with earlier Anatolian rider gods within a Christian cult context.<sup>7</sup> Considering these trends and the assemblage of objects produced, the workshops may have catered to a developing market of Christian pilgrims

<sup>6</sup> Talloen, P., *From Pagan to Christian: Religious Iconography in Material Culture from Sagalassos. The Archaeology of Late Antique 'Paganism'* (Late Antique Archaeology 7), L. Lavan, M. Mulryan, eds. Leiden: Brill 2011, 575-607.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid